**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of the claims:**

1. (Currently amended): A method for protection of an excitable tissue in a mammal having a neurodegenerative condition, comprising administering peripherally to said mammal an amount of EPO effective for the protection of the excitable tissue, wherein said administering does not result in a toxic increase in hemoglobin concentration or ~~the~~ hematocrit in said mammal.

2. (Currently amended): The method of Claim 1 wherein said ~~mammal has~~ neurodegenerative condition is a neurodegenerative disease.

3. (Original): The method of Claim 1 wherein said excitable tissue is central nervous system tissue or peripheral nervous system tissue.

4. (Currently amended): The method of Claim 1 wherein said administration comprises oral, topical, intraluminal, ~~or by~~ inhalation, or parenteral administration.

5. (Currently amended): The method of Claim 4 wherein said parenteral administration is intravenous, intraarterial, subcutaneous, intramuscular, intraperitoneal, submucosal, rectal, or intradermal.

6. (Original): The method of Claim 1 wherein said administration is acute or chronic.

7-8. (Canceled).

9. (Currently amended): The method of Claim 1 wherein said EPO is a recombinant form thereof.

10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently amended): ~~The method of Claim 1,~~ A method for protection of neuronal tissue from injury or tissue damage, comprising administering peripherally to said mammal an amount of EPO effective for the protection of the neuronal tissue, wherein the EPO is administered prior to a medical or surgical procedure, wherein said administering does not result in a toxic increase in hemoglobin concentration or hematocrit in said mammal.

12. (Currently amended): ~~A method for protection of an excitable tissue in a mammal having a neurodegenerative condition, comprising administering peripherally to said mammal an effective non-toxic amount of EPO for the protection of the excitable tissue~~ The method of Claim 11, wherein the EPO is administered at least one time 4 hours to 24 hours prior to the ~~a~~ medical or surgical procedure.

13. (Currently amended): The method of Claim ~~12~~ 11, wherein the medical procedure is labor or childbirth.

14. (Currently amended): The method of Claim ~~12~~ 11, wherein the surgical procedure is tumor resection, aneurysm repair, or a coronary artery bypass procedure.

15. (Currently amended): A method for protection of an excitable tissue in a mammal having mechanical trauma, diabetic neuropathy or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, comprising administering peripherally to said mammal an amount of EPO effective for the protection of the excitable tissue, wherein said administering does not result in a toxic increase in hemoglobin concentration or ~~the~~ hematocrit in said mammal.

16. (Canceled).

17. (Previously presented): The method of Claim 15 wherein said excitable tissue is central nervous system tissue or peripheral nervous system tissue.

18. (Previously presented): The method of Claim 15 wherein said administration comprises oral, topical, intraluminal or by inhalation or parenteral administration.

19. (Previously presented): The method of Claim 18 wherein said parenteral administration is intravenous, intraarterial, subcutaneous, intramuscular, intraperitoneal, submucosal or intradermal.

20. (Previously presented): The method of Claim 15 wherein said administration is acute or chronic.

21. (Canceled).

22. (Previously presented): The method of Claim 15 wherein said EPO is a recombinant form thereof.

23-27. (Canceled).